

*Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park  
Park Advisory Commission Meeting*

May 18, 2006

Strasburg Town Hall  
Strasburg, Virginia

- I) General Introductions
- II) Introduction of Mr. Randolph Jones, representing the Commonwealth of Virginia
- III) Review and Approval of Minutes from 16 March 2006 (10 minutes)
- IV) GMP Status Update (20 minutes)
- V) GMP Alternatives; presentation and discussion – Elizabeth Clarke and Michael Clarke, Wallace Roberts & Todd (120 minutes)
- VI) Old Business
  - Bylaws Subcommittee update – Mr. Gary Rinkerman
  - Status of Town of Strasburg appointment
- VII) New Business
- VIII) Meetings after July – timing, frequency, duration, location
- IX) Next Meeting – 20 July 2006 in Middletown

Meeting Notes

Commission members in attendance: Diann Jacox, Designated Federal Official (DFO); Mary Bowser, Chair; Kris Tierney, Vice Chair; Elizabeth McClung; Howard Kittell; Gene Dicks; Jim Smalls; Randolph Jones; Patrick Farris; Fred Andreae; Dan Stickley; Gary Rinkerman

Commission members absent: Roy Downey; Richard Kleese

Others in attendance: Chris Stubbs, NPS; Steven Stubbs, NPS; Sarah Reid, Winchester Star; Catharine Gilliam, National Parks Conservation Assoc.; Mary Ann Littrell; David Blount; Nora Amos, Town of Strasburg; Michael Clarke, WRT; Elizabeth Clarke, WRT

Chairwoman Mary Bowser chaired the meeting.

Chairwoman Bowser introduced Mr. Randolph Jones, the new Commissioner for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The notes from the 16 March 2006 meeting were reviewed and approved as written.

Mr. Chris Stubbs of the National Park Service provided a general management plan status update to the Commission, the details of which were handed out to the Commissioners and the public. There was a discussion of the proposed format for the upcoming NPS

scoping meetings. The meetings will consist of a presentation by the NPS, then small group discussions with the public in which the Commissioners will play a role. The meeting dates and times were handed out to the Commissioners and the public.

There was also a discussion of the public notification/announcement for the scoping meetings. It was generally felt by the Commissioners that the meetings should be announced widely including:

- Local newspapers
- Radio
- Chambers of commerce and tourism boards
- Local governments
- Local landowners inside the park
- An expanded mailing list, including additions from the partner organizations

There was a presentation from Ms. Elizabeth Clarke from the consulting firm Wallace Roberts & Todd on general management planning in the National Park Service. Ms. Clarke focused particularly on the development of alternatives in GMPs. Then Mr. Michael Clarke from the same firm gave a presentation that showed examples of how partnership parks have been managed across the country. After these presentations, there was an open-ended discussion among the Commissioners about GMP alternatives, the notes from which are appended to these commission notes.

There was a discussion of the draft by-laws. Mr. Gary Rinkerman stated that the bylaws subcommittee had worked on the bylaws to make them shorter and remove some of the provisions of concern. Mr. Rinkerman made the changes and the document was then reviewed by the subcommittee. After several more changes, the document has been forwarded to the National Park Service (NPS) for review. The NPS will review the document and then send it on to the Department of Interior Solicitor for review. In addition, the question about the Commission's role and function regarding holding public meetings and hearings will be forwarded to the Solicitor for clarification.

There was a discussion of the Town of Strasburg vacancy on the Commission, and concern was raised again that this position has not been filled. Ms. Jacox stated that the NPS sent a formal letter requesting that the Town nominate a Commissioner, but has received no response. Nora Amos, Strasburg Town Planner, spoke from the audience and stated that the Mayor would like to wait until July for the appointments of the new Town Council members before making a nomination to the Park Advisory Commission. Ms. Jacox stated that this is a critical position and that waiting until July would be problematic.

There was a discussion of the meetings that would occur after the July Commission meeting. The Commissioners decided to continue to meet bi-monthly, on the third Thursday, at 9:00 a.m. For the next year, the meetings will rotate between Front Royal (Warren County Government Center), Strasburg (Strasburg Town Hall), and Middletown (Middletown Town Hall). The NPS will prepare a schedule and Federal Register Notice for these meetings.

The next meeting will be on July 20, 2006 at the Middletown Town Hall, Middletown, VA.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned by Chairwoman Bowser.

List of handouts provided at 18 May 2006 meeting

1. Meeting agenda
2. Minutes from 16 March 2006 Commission meeting
3. GMP status update
4. Dates, locations, and time for NPS scoping meetings

**Appendix I – Notes on General Management Plan Alternatives**

After the presentation by Elizabeth and Michael Clarke of Wallace Roberts & Todd, the Commissioners engaged in a discussion of GMP alternatives. The discussion points are presented in no particular order of importance:

- NPS current funding realities must be incorporated into the planning process
- Funding levels will have an impact on each partner
- Important for partners to be sure they have the financial resources to sustain their operations
- There is a favorable view of the cluster concept as depicted in the SVBF plan
- There is the major question of how to get “buy-in” for the NPS GMP decisions – one option is for the various stakeholders to be bound by a legal document
  - No matter how good the plan is, it will not be implemented if there is not a vehicle that requires the parties to interact; for example, Frederick County could choose to ignore the plan and then it would become irrelevant
- One possible management entity is a foundation with a board and voting members including the key partners
  - Can the NPS be legally bound to a voting board?
  - Can the Park Advisory Commission serve as this entity?
  - Figuring out the management entity may be the most difficult aspect of this plan
  - There must be an entity that the public can approach for park information, interpretation, etc. There must be a management entity for the park.
  - SVBF could serve as an example
  - Local governments must buy in to whatever entity is created or park will not be successful – we must engage local governments in the GMP process
- To what extent are we talking about managing each other’s operations or are we talking about managing our own operations and collaborating?
- Probably more likely a collaboration – details of each operation should be left to the organization that manages that operation
- GMP should have general principles for how the stakeholders collaborate

- The cooperative agreements could be the instrument for enforcing the implementation of the GMP
- Perhaps the Park Advisory Commission could serve as the basis for the collaboration
- For partners to cede some level of autonomy there would have to be something that they get back in return
  - Ceding autonomy to the collective vision
  - But partners must still remain responsive to their boards
- NPS is guided by NPS regulations and policies – agency can only assist the partners and others to the extent that they are guided by these policies as well
  - For example, NPS has responsibility to notify public about major activities (for example, reenactment) that will affect them, but partners do not. There is a desire that the partners would sign on to an elevated commitment to the public
- Partnerships mean something very different today than 20 years ago. Used to mean primarily that it was a way for groups to receive government funding. Now partnerships mean working together and in many cases the partners are funding government programs, facilities, etc. This represents a paradigm shift.
- An important aspect of the partnership that we haven't discussed is the private landowners within the park – very important players – what voice do the private property owners have in the GMP creation?
  - Also, “park community partners” (from the legislation) – what does this mean?
  - So, there are partners other than the “Cornerstones” – how do we involve them?
  - Private property owners are listed as park community partners and have a voice on the Park Advisory Commission
- Private property – we must make sure that private property rights are respected, particularly with regard to park visitors
- We are fortunate that the partners are currently self-sufficient
- The vistas and the setting of the park (landscapes) may be the most important aspect of the area – the GMP must protect these things. The value of the area will be diminished exponentially if the landscape becomes cluttered
  - The landscapes are a core value
  - Only way to protect landscapes is through partnerships
  - Landscapes and views are influenced by forces within and outside the park
- One way to engage local governments is to show them that the park can bring revenue
- GMP and planning process needs to stick to broad vision, then the partners and other stakeholders contribute resources toward the vision